

Nakhon Phanom RTAFB, 1975

56th SPS

by [Warren Maynard](#)

I was a young buck sergeant who married a Thai lady during my first tour in country of Thailand. I was station at Korat Royal Thai Air Force Base. I came back to the states and was station at Grand Forks N.D. It was so cold the same day I went to duty, I went to CBPO and put in for an overseas assignment back to Thailand.

Fourteen months later I had gotten an assignment to Nakhon Phanom RTAFB (NKP) Thailand. I did not know much about this Air Force base. I had gotten permission to take thirty days leave in country. My wife was at Korat, ready to have our first baby which turned out to be a girl.

I left Korat Air Base and caught the Klong ride to NKP. I stayed in the Security Police Squadron hootch area until my wife could arrived from Korat, with our new born daughter. I was ready to start my assignment just after eight days of .

My primary AFSC was 81150A. I processing in through CBPO and meet the Squadron Commander of the Security Police. He directed me to the Squadron Operation, who in turn called the Kennel Master. Just after two days I was on my merry way to the K-9 Corp., and on the power shift walking my dog.

After sixty days, I had enough rank to become Kennel Support, along with Sgt Breeding and A1C Flowers. We were re-training the sentry dogs to be certified to patrol. Higher Headquarters came over from Japan to make sure all sentry dogs would listen to voice and hand signals. As I recall, all of our efforts, Sgt Breeding and A1C Flowers, plus myself got praise for a job well done. We were also gearing up for the CAFEY inspection, where everything not nailed down gets painted and cleaned.

I recall that the K-9 section had gotten an excellent rating. MSgt Walls came out to the K-9 section with some equipment while Breeding, Flowers, and myself, were out fixing the obstacle course. I asked him if he had any positions available in Squadron Supply or the BPS section. He stated to me that he may have a position available in supply in a few days. He told me I needed a letter stating why I wanted to change squadron sections.

TSgt Bailey had given me his blessing about trying to change sections. He was getting relieved of NCOIC of the K-9 section, and Working for MSgt Walls, NCOIC of special sections, Sq Supply Motor pool, and Systems. Approximately one month later, Captain Dow called me into his office and told me that I had gotten the job as NCOIC Security Police Supply. I gladly accepted the position.

About six months later, May 1975, I was leaving in a base taxi when Captain Hunter came to me and said he needed me to stay for awhile. He did not give a reason until the taxi had departed for the front gate, then told me that some Cambodians had seized the USS Mayaguez, and crew. I was needed to pass out missing equipment to the responding members of the selected team for deployment.

At around 7: 30 p.m. on the May 13, 1975, I asked MSgt Walls, if he needed any more volunteers for the Operation, and Walls told me to stand by and he would check his roster. I told him I would go if he needed me. MSgt Walls came back and told me that he had plenty of volunteers from our squadron. He told me to go ahead and go home. I stopped a base taxi and the driver asked me what was going on and I told him I didn't know. I went home, and stayed up for a couple of hours, and hit the hay, as I had to get back to work as usual.

As I came back to work, I was informed that the helicopter had been in a crash somewhere approximately thirty to forty miles of base. The commanders were getting the off base recovery team together to relieve the night time shift. That day was a very sad day with the lost of my friends.

After duty, I was on my way home when I ran into [Sgt Hankamer](#)'s wife. She told me she knew something was wrong because,

she had went to the market and bought a three legged chicken. She had told me that Greg was on board the CH53 helicopter. Sgt Hankamer only lived about four houses down from me, in GI alley in NKP.

I remember [Sgt McKelvey](#) who worked out of the same office as I. We had our desks pushed together. He volunteered to be on this mission as well. He only lived about two blocks from Town Patrol Headquarters. I went to his house to see if his wife and children needed anything.

I will always miss my friends that were killed on the [Rescue Operation for the USS Mayaguez](#).

Since a friend of over 30 plus years, sent me this e-mailed address to the VSPA Web Site, I look at it quit often, which brings back memories. I have numerous stories but I thought I would share with you my thought.

Thank You
Warren Maynard, MSgt,USAF ret

We Take Care of Our Own

[Click to Report BROKEN LINKS or Photos, or Comment](#)